

Message Text

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43

ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-12 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-09 H-02

INR-09 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-10 PA-03 RSC-01 PRS-01 SS-14

USIA-12 COME-00 EB-11 LAB-06 SIL-01 RSR-01 /139 W

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R 281254 Z MAR 73

FM AMCONSUL DURBAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1483

INFO AMEMBASSY LONDON

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

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CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E. O. 11652: N/ A

TAGS: ELAB, PINS, SF

SUBJECT: MORE STRIKES IN NATAL

REF: DURBAN A20, DURBAN 118

1. AS PREDICTED REPAIR, ISOLATED STRIKES CONTINUE PLAGUE NATAL INDUSTRIES. TWO SIGNIFICANT STRIKES HAVE NOW HIT NATAL, WITH SOME 500 AFRICANS OUT AT THE R60 MILLION ALUSAF ALUMINUM SMELTER AT RICHARDS BAY AND SOME 1,000 OUT AT VEKA CLOTHING FACTORY IN CHARLESTOWN. BOTH STRIKES BEGAN MARCH 26 WITH WORKERS DEMANDING LARGE WAGE INCREASES. NEITHER COMPANY HAS ORGANIZED WORKS COMMITTEES.

2. ALUSAF MANAGEMENT OFFER INCREASE WAGES MINIMUM R2 PER WEEK REJECTED BY STRIKERS, WHO INSISTING R1 PER HOUR BASIC WAGE. PRESENT WAGE MINIMUM AT R12 PER WEEK. STRIKERS HAVE CALLED UPON KWAZULU GOVERNMENT REPRESENT THEM IN NEGOTIATIONS

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WITH ALUSAF. KWAZULU COUNCILLOR COMMUNITY AFFAIRS DLADLA, FOLLOWING HIS INTERVENTION IN SAPPI PAPER MILL STRIKE (REFTEL), ACCEPTED ARBITER ROLE BUT SO FAR COMPANY OFFICIALS HAVE REFUSED NEGOTIATE WITH HIM.

3. AS STRIKES GO INTO THIRD DAY, BOTH COMPANIES HAVE ISSUED ULTIMATUM THAT WORKERS MUST RETURN JOBS TODAY OR FACE PERMANENT SEPARATION. ANSWERING THREAT, DLADLA HAS WARNED KWAZULU GOVERNMENT MAY USE ITS INFLUENCE DISCOURAGE ZULU LABOR TAKE UP VACATED JOBS.

4. COMMENT: STRIKES' GREATEST SIGNIFICANCE MAY BE AS TESTING GROUND FOR ROLE KWAZULU GOVERNMENT PLAYING BEHALF ZULU WORKERS. SUCCESS OR FAILURE WIN SOME BENEFITS AFRICAN WORKERS MAY DETERMINE SUPPORT KWAZULU GOVERNMENT WILL RECEIVE FROM URBAN AFRICANS. IT WILL ALSO INFLUENCE ITS FUTURE COURSE VIS- A- VIS LABOR RELATIONS. INTERVENTION MAY ALSO TEMPT SAG TOWARD POLICY OF LEGITIMIZING HOMELAND REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF AFRICAN WORKERS AS ANSWER TO CURRENT PRESSURES PERMIT AFRICAN TRADE UNIONISM.
HOLMES

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*** Current Classification *** LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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